

Conference goers will enjoy farm tours

Having recently been recognized as one of Canada's top eight agricultural areas, the Comox Valley has attracted two national agri-tourism and agri-marketing events.

The Valley will be the only B.C. community to host the Canadian Farm Business Management Council Agri-Tourism Marketing Caravan Oct. 6. The full-day workshop is designed to connect Canadian farmers with North American's leading experts in agricultural innovation.

"The workshop is structured to help producers build more profitable farm market businesses by bringing new ideas and professional development opportunities right to their doorstep," said John Watson, executive director of Comox Valley Economic Development (CVED), an organization that worked to bring the event here as part of its agrifood strategy.

The full-day workshop boasts speakers who include Brent Warner, executive director of Farmers' Markets Canada; Richard Buck, president and owner of AgriTours Canada Inc.; and Jane Eckert, former vice-president of marketing with Eckert's Country Store.

Just prior to the workshop, the Canadian Farm Writers' Federation has selected the Comox Valley as its annual conference destination.

From Oct. 2 to 5, more than 100 agricultural professionals from across Canada, including reporters, editors and broadcasters will descend on the Comox Valley to partake in extensive professional development and farm tours of the region.

The farm tours, organized by CVED, will provide conference goers first hand access to progressive local farms and specialty producers. From oyster

farms to cheese-makers, cranberry fields to greenhouses, and wineries to wasabi farms, attendees will experience one of the most diversified growing regions in B.C., says CVED.

"The Comox Valley has made significant strides in becoming known as a major hub for agriculture and agritourism," said Watson. "The fact that we are seeing such a significant group of influential agricultural individuals coming to the area provides us an incredible opportunity to profile the work that our community, producers and farmers are engaged in."

Conference information can be found at www.ctwf.ca. Agri-Tourism Marketing Caravan workshop details can be found at www.farmcentre.com/Events/Announcements/Events/MarketingCaravan.

— Comox Valley Economic Development